

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0663

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

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COMNAVFORCARIB

CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 0749

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFO, PGOV, ECIN CGEN

SUBJECT: ST. LUCIA -- INDEPENDENCE THIS YEAR?

SUMMARY: PREMIER COMPTON OF ST. LUCIA SAID THE ISLAND  
WILL BECOME INDEPDEPENDENT THIS DECEMBER 13 WITHOUT PRIOR  
GENERAL ELECTIONS OF REFERENDUM. THE OPPOSITION ST.  
LUCIA LABOUR PARTY, THOUGH, CONSIDERS THAT EITHER A  
REFERENDUM OR A BRITISH "INITIATIVE" IS NECESSARY. THE  
SLP RECEIVED 45 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE LAST ELECTIONS,  
IN 1974. SOM COMPTON MAY NOT REALIZE HIS GOAL OF INDEPENDENCE  
ON THE DATE HE SIGNIFIED, MAY INDEED HAVE TO WAIT  
CONSIDERABLY LONGER. IS UWIS BENT ON SECURING INDEPENDENCE,  
ON DECEMBER 13, HOWEVER AND CAN SURVIVE THE MOVE POLITICALLY,  
THERE IS NOTHING TO STOP HIM. WHY SHOULD THE ST. LUCIA  
GOVERNMENT WANT INDEPEDENCE? THERE IS NOTHING TO BE LOST  
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BY IT, AND PERHAPS SOMETHING TO BE GAINED.

1. ST LUCIA WILL BECOME INDEPENDENT THIS DECEMBER 13, DECLARED THE ISLAND'S PREMIER JOHN COMPTON. ADDRESSING THE ANNKAL CONFERENCE OF THE RULING UNITED WORKERS PARTY, COMPTON SAID THAT THE MOVE TO INDEPENDENCE WILL NOT REQUIRE GENERAL ELECTIONS OR A REFERENDUM (THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION TOOK PLACE IN MAY 1974 AND ANOTHER IS NOT CONSTITUTIONALLY DUE UNTIL MAY 1979), THAT THE CONSTITUTION ALLOWS FOR INDEPENDENCE BY AN ORDER IN COUNCIL OF HMG. (ST LUCIA HAS BEEN SINCE MARCH 1, 1967 AN "ASSOCIATED STATE"-- A STATE IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM, WHICH RETAINS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE OF ITS FORMER COLONY.)L

2. COMPTON ALSO TOOK THE OCCASION TO REMARK ON THE CARIBBEAN COMMON MARKET RELATIVE TO HIS CALL FOR INDEPENDENCE. THE MDC'S (MORE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES) OF CARICOM, BECUASE INDEPENDENT, HAVE ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, WHEREAS CARICOM'S LDC'S WERE RESTRICTED IN THEIR SEARCH FOR ASSISTANCE TO BRITAIN "WHOSE ECONOMIC STRENGTH IS IN DECLINE." ALL MEMBERS OF CARICOM MUST HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT FUNDS, BUT THIS WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE UNTIL ALL HAVE REMOVED THEIR STATUS OF DEPENDENCY, COMPTON SAID.

3. COMMENT: UNTIL RECENTLY, ANTIGUA APPEARED TO BE IN THE LEAD AS THE NEXT ASSOCIATED STATE TO BECOME INDEPENDENT. THE RESULTS OF THE GENERAL ELECTIONS THERE IN FEBRUARY CHANGED THAT; THE VICTORIOUS ANTIGKA LABOKR PARTY OF VERE BIRD IS NOT AVID FOR INDEPENDENCE AND AN AIDE TO BIRD HAS TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THE TIMETABLE HAS BEEN SET BACK 3-4 YEARS. THAT LEAVES ST. LUCIA AND ST. KITTS NECK AND NECK. PREMIER ROBERT L. BRADSHAW OF ST. KITTS HAS THE POSSIBLE SECESSION OF THE CONSTITUENT ISLAND OF NEVIS TO CONTEND WITH, A SECESSION THAT MIGHT WELL BE PRECIPITATED BY ST. KITTS MOVE TO INDEPENDENCE -- NEVISANS HAVE GRAVE MISGIVINGS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE UNDER BRADSHAW'S RULE AND MIGHT GO SO FAR AS TO TAKE UP ARMS IN AN ATTEMPT TO EFFECT THEIR SEPARATION. THIS GREATLY COMPLICATES BRADSHAW'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BRITISH ON INDEPENDENCE  
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AND MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT IT WILL BE ACHIEVED BEFORE 1977.

COMPTON IN ST. LUCIA FACES AN OBSTACLE TOO. THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION ST. LUCIA LABOUR PARTY, ALLAN LOUISY, ADMONISHED THE PREMIER IN FEBRUARY NOT TO SEEK INDEPENDENCE ON HIS GOVERNMENT'S OWN INITIATIVE, THAT IT COULD ONLY BE REALIZED THROUGH REFERENDUM IN ST. LUCIA OR HMG'S TERMINATING THE ASSOCIATION ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE.

SINCE THE SLP GAINED 45 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE OUR ELECTION, TO THE UWP'S 53 PERCENT, LOUISY'S WARNING MAY NOT BE ONE THAT CAN BE IGNORED. SO THE COMING OF ST. LUCIA'S INDEPENDENCE, DESPITE COMPTON'S SETTING OF THE DECEMBER DATE, COULD BE WELL INTO 1977 OR EVEN BEYOND THAT.

HOWEVER, IF COMPTON IS DETERMINED TO SEE ST. LUCIA INDEPENDENT THIS YEAR (HIS SETTING OF A PRECISE DATE TENDS TO THE BELIEF THAT HE IS) AND HE CAN CARRY IT OFF POLITICALLY, THERE IS REALLY NOTHING TO STOP HIM. THE NECESSARY BRITISH "INITIATIVES" THE OPPOSITION LEADER SPOKE OF WOULD SOON BE FORTCHOMING IN THE FACE OF THIS DETERMINATION (THOUGH IT IS FAR FROM CERTAIN THAT A REFERENDUM WOULD PRODUCE THE NECESSARY 2/3 MAJORITY OR EVEN THAT COMPTON WOULD WIN AN ELECTION). THE BRITISH DO NOT HAVE THE WILL, LET ALONE THE MEANS, TO WITHHOLD INDEPENDENCE. THE "NEGOTIATIONS" WITH THE BRITISH THAT ST. LUCIA WILL ENTER INTO, IF INDEED THEY CAN BE CALLED THAT IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, LARGELY CONCERN FORM. AND THE FORM OR MANNER OF ACVIEVING INDEPENDENCE MIGHT BE OF IMPORTANCE TO AN ASSOCIATED STATE'S HEAD OF GOVERNMENT FOR PURELY DOEMSTIC POLITICAL REASONS. BUT IF HE ESTIMATES HE CAN BEAR THE POLITICAL COSTS, HE IS BASICALLY FREE TO ACT AS HE WILLS. (BRADSHAW'S POSITION VIS-VIS HMG IS A SPECIAL ONE IN THAT HE MUST COME TO SOME UNDERSTANDING WITH THE BRITISH CONCERNING THEIR REACTION TO A NEVIS SECESSION -- MUST INSURE THAT HMG WILL ALLOW HIM TO WORK HIS WILL ON NEVIS. THUS BRADSHAW MUST IN THE STRICT SENSE OF THE WORD "NEGOTIATE".)

ST LUCIA, LIKE GRENADA, HAS A POPULATION SOMEWHAT OVER 100 THOUSAND, BUT IS CONSIDERABLY LARGER -- 238 SQUARE MILES TO 133 FOR GRENADA AND ITS CONSTITUENT ISLANDS. PER CAPITA  
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GDP ON ST. LUCIA (1971 EST.) WAS \$290, COMPAED WITH \$250 ON GRENADA 81974 EST.). WHY, IT MIGHT BE ASKED, DO STATES LIKE THESE THAT CANNOT SUPPORT THEMSELVES GO INDEPENDENT? WHY NOT?, THEIR GOVERNMENTS MIGHT WELL RESPOND. GRENADA STILL RECEIVES UK ASSISTANCE AND THE PRESENT ASSOCIATED STATES, ONCE INDEPENDENT, WILL PRBABLY CONTINUE TO RECEIVE IT AS WELL. AND THEY NOW HAVE ACCESS TO OTHER SOURCES, ESPECIALLY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. SPREADING THEIR DEPENDENCY AROUND IS APPARENTLY MORE TOLERABLE THAN BEING TOTALLY BEHOLDEN TO THE FORMER COLONIZER.  
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